

House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors

September 11, 2013

Testimony re House Bills 4927 and 4928

In previous hearings before this committee regarding the language and intent of these bills, Chairman Kurtz stated on more than one occasion, that these bills would in no way affect any couple who are currently able to adopt under the law. Since the only families in Michigan who are not eligible to adopt currently are same sex couples, it appears that this bills, whether by intent or not, will further serve to restrict the availability of stable homes to children in need of a loving family, regardless of the parents' sexual orientation or gender identity.

I do not speak as an advocate for adoption rights; the intent of this testimony is to present data-based information about LGBT families and mental health based on the most recent social science research findings.

- There is no scientific evidence that parent effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation; lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children. Beliefs that lesbians and gay men are not fit parents have no empirical basis or support.
- In a major 25-year longitudinal study, the children from lesbian households were rated significantly higher all virtually all measures of social, academic and psychological adjustment as compared to the children of heterosexual families.
- Research indicates that children's optimal development is influenced much more by the nature of the relationships and interactions within the family, rather than the particular structural form, i.e., same- or opposite-sex parents.
- There is no empirical evidence that having a gay or lesbian parent influences gender role development. The overwhelming majority of sons and daughters of same-sex couples grow up to identify as heterosexual.
- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "There is ample evidence to show that children raised by same-gender parents fare as well as those raised by heterosexual parents. More than 25 years of research have documented that there is no relationship between parents' sexual orientation and any measure of a child's emotional, psychosocial and behavioral adjustment. These data have demonstrated no risk to children as a result of growing up in a family with one or more gay parents. Conscientious and nurturing adults, whether they are men or women, heterosexual or homosexual, can be excellent parents. The rights, benefits and protections of civil marriage can further strengthen these families." (*Pediatrics*: Vol. 118 No. 1 July 2006, pp. 349-364)

This is just a brief summary of a growing body of findings that consistently show that children flourish in same-sex parent households. Please consider this research as you make a data-driven decision about what is in the best interest of Michigan children.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Kovach, PhD
Project Director
Michigan Project for Informed Public Policy

248-302-6774 judith@mpipp.org